PS 3531
.R24 M8
1918
Copy 1

Mother of Mine
and other Verse

MOTHER OF MINE
AND OTHER VERSE

BY

HARRY NOYES PRATT

COPYRIGHTED 1918
BY HARRY NOYES PRATT

PS3531
.R59M6
1918

FOREWORD

To those who by their sympathy and understanding have encouraged the production of these verses, they are affectionately sent forth, with no apology for such faults as there may be, but with the sincere wish that they may reflect some little of the beauty and joy which has been given me. ¶ *And to her whose love and care and sympathy are always with me, this little volume is gratefully dedicated—to dear "Mother of Mine."*

HARRY NOYES PRATT
1918

JAN -8 1919

©CLA508889

no 1

MOTHER OF MINE

AT quiet eve with all the day's work done
I sit within my casement wide
And watch the glory of the setting sun.
Then mem'ry hearkens through the years,
I'm carried back to boyhood's days;
Again my mother greets me at the door,
Upon my head again her hand she lays.
Above me bends her dear, sweet face.

I tell again the day's adventures o'er,
Recount to her the paths I've trod,
The hills I've climbed, the tales of woodland lore,
Of bird and flow'r and new-made friends:
The shimm'ring trout within the stream—
The robin's nest—it's wealth of dainty eggs—
The old sawmill with sunken roof and beam—
I tell the day's adventures o'er.

Within her heart I never shall grow old;
The boy I was I'll always be.
And to my mother tales I'll still unfold
Of day's adventures, problems met.
Within her heart I'll solace find;
Her loving smile and tenderness of hand
Will sooth the aching heart, the weary mind—
Within her heart I'm still her boy.

Mother of mine, dear Mother of mine,
Your hair is as white as the wind-driven snow,
But the smile on your face is as sweet as the rose;
You are young in my heart, and—Ah, Mother—I know
That your love will be mine 'till the last long repose—
Dear Mother of Mine!—dear Mother of Mine!

IT IS NOT TRUE

THEY tell me that in Flanders you lie dead
While o'er you ruddy poppies blow and bloom;
That broken is your thread upon the loom,
The thread within the fabric just begun,
A golden thread within the fabric spun.
They tell me that on Flanders field of brown
You laid your glorious weapons gently down
And fell asleep, your arms beneath your head.

But down the slopes I see you come to me
As in the days of old, all eagerly,
The tender grasses bending at your tread,
The fragrant apple blossoms o'er you spread.
Your smile is tender as it used to be—
And yet they say in Flanders you lie dead!

They wonder why I do not mourn for you
Who there in Flanders field are lying dead
While battling armies pass above your head.
They see me in my old accustomed way
About the village streets from day to day.
They see my undimmed eye and quiet face,
They see of grief for you no tear nor trace.

For in the garden where the larkspurs grew
When you were with me in those dewy hours
Of love among the fragrant, bloss'ming bowers,
The larkspur blooms again, all slender blue,
And there in dusk of eve I come to you
And meet you, hold you, midst my garden's flowers—
That you are dead in Flanders is not true!

OVERSEAS

A SONNET

DEAR girl of mine, I wonder if you know
That through the long night hours my thoughts of you
Are my companions, ever staunch and true
As you are true to me. You love me so
That I am brave. What matter who my foe;
You are my helm, my shield, my armor bright.
You give me courage, strength, the will to fight,
Nor yield, nor bend, no matter what the blow.
Dear girl of mine, this is a wondrous thing
That you should guard me, even over seas;
That half across the stricken world you bring
The comfort of your presence and the ease
That comes of faith and trust. I hear you sing:
I rest: I lay my head upon your knees.

LAFAYETTE SQUARE

HIGH on a hilltop green I stand,
The busy streets on every hand.
The grime, the strife, so far below,
Here quietude and peace I know.
The smooth, soft sward beneath my feet,
The odor of the jasmine sweet—
The song of bird or laugh of child
In happiness all undefiled—
The freshness of the new-mown sod—
A breathing spot, a place of God.

And far across the sparkling bay
Proud Tamalpais guards the way.
The circling seagulls shrilly cry
About the steamers passing by.
Pursuing waves spin white with foam
As shoreward they come rushing home.
Across the hill come wreaths of mist
As salty as the sea they've kissed—
I leave the hill; I take with me
Full measure of its harmony.

LULLABY-O, BY-O BABE

WHEN all the little birds have gone to rest
An' night winds whispe' soft an' low,
When red an' gold am glowin' in the west,
Then Mammy holds her baby lovin', so,
An' sings to him this lullaby,
Lullaby-o, sleepy boy-o, lullaby:

"Silvah moon am sailin' low,
By-o babe, mah babe;
Off to slumbah lan' yoh go.
By-o babe, mah babe.
Baby dreams will come to you,
Keep yoh happy long night through,
Whilst yoh mammy watches you,
By-o babe, mah babe."

The rivah's lappin' soft upon the shore,
Shy whip-poor-will am callin' sweet.
While star gleams come a-peepin' more an' more,
Ol' mammy cuddles warm the little feet
An' sings to him this lullaby,
Lullaby-o, sleepy boy-o, lullaby:

"Silvah moon am sailin' high,
By-o babe, mah babe.
Slumbah lan' am comin' nigh,
By-o babe, mah babe.
Happy dreams am comin' fast,
Drowsy eyes am closed at last,
All the troubled day am past,
By-o babe, mah babe."

CHRIST WALKS WITH ME

CHRIST walks with me across the shell-swept fields:
Bare is his head and empty are his hands.
Unarmed is he, yet unafraid he stands
And unafraid am I amid the strife,
For this I know, Christ is my shield and life.
Unarmed is he and yet a power wields
Which turns aside the sword. No foe may harm
With whom Christ walks. And now thrice armed am I:
All evil forces harmless pass me by.
With Christ as shield I know I am secure.
He is my sword, a flaming weapon bright
Which wins the strife and sweeps away the night,
Which cleans the world of all that is impure.
Christ walks with me. With him I shall endure.

LOVES ME, LOVES ME NOT

I WONDER if of happiness or pain
You bring me most? I wonder if you care?
You say you love me: all the world seems fair,
The sunny skies hold not a hint of rain.
My vanished youth seems with me once again
And hand in hand I wander with you where
Sweet flowers bloom amid the meadows there.
And then you say I bore you, that my tale
Of love for you, too often told, is stale.
Yet when I turn away you call me back
And turn to gold again the clouds of black.
I wonder if you care? Or is my love
A thing for moment's wearing, like a glove,
Then cast aside, forgotten, with disdain?

TOUCH NOT MINE ANNOINTED

1 Chron. 16:20-35

WE are thine annointed, Lord, who goeth forth today,
Resistless as thy will, Oh Lord, we enter in the fray.
In mighty hosts we're passing across the trackless seas;
We bear to heathen nations thy wonderful decrees.
Thy glory, thy salvation, declare we unto them;
The heathen claims that men are serfs in thy name we condemn.
The idols they have made them of will and lust and greed,
And unto which for sacrifice they've made thy people bleed,
Are hurled from their exalting, are ground beneath thy feet,
To thee are made an off'ring, thy triumph is complete.
Then shout, ye heavens, in gladness and let .the fields rejoice,
Let heathen nations tremble at the grandeur of thy voice.
Thy mercy is enduring, in Truth all men are free—
To thee be thanks and glory; all praise be unto thee.

CAROLAN

DEAR friend of mine,
They tell me you have gone,
That you have passed beyond
Those gates of pearl
Which open but one way.
They tell me that your loyal heart
Is stilled. I will not have it so.
No love like yours, so rich and strong
For all mankind, could pass.
It may be for a little while
You've gone away—beyond the door—
Into the garden—otherwhere—
But this I know, you are not far.
You could not leave for long
Those friends who love you so.

I think I hear your laughter,
Hear you call to me—
I feel your presence near;
You are not far away.

YOU BID ME GO

YOU cannot understand.
You cannot see why I should wish
To go—to leave the old home ties,
To leave behind the old, familiar faces
And the old, familiar ways.
You do not see in me
The man. You see the boy
Who followed you about. The child
On you dependent. He who ran to you
With every hurt and care.
I am a man.
Where once to me was given
Now must I give.
The guarding care which held me safe
Was but for this, that I might yield again.
Protected then, 'tis now I who protect.
I am a man,
Strong to uphold those same ideals,
Those principles and faiths
For which our fathers fought.
And you would have me so.
You would not have me craven,
Seizing each least excuse to stay.
I were not your son
If I were thus. You who through years
And long did keep me, clothe me,
Give me ev'ry comfort, ev'ry care,
Could not beget a coward!
It is the flesh, weak and outworn,
Which thus would hold me.
Your spirit, strong with its undying youth,
Will gladly bid me,
Go!

BEYOND THE HILL

WHAT lies beyond the hill?
No easy road to knowledge, ours.
But e'er the mystery be solved
The rough hill paths
We must surmount, until,
The summit reached, we see beyond—
Behold before us spread
Beauty undreamed of;
Ready to our hand
Our soul's desire.

Keep then thine eyes upturned
To seek the goal.
The crag beneath thy feet,
The grasping snag,
The chasm deep,
Unseen is oft unfelt;
Unseen is scarcely feared.
Watch then thy goal.

A GLADE WHERE VIOLETS GROW

DEEP down within a fragrant woodland brown
I know a tiny glade where violets grow,
Where all along the hillside, stars of light,
The trilliums lift their lovely heads of snow,
Three-petaled on the broad green leaves below.
And here spring beauties shake their charming bells
Above the mould wherein the bloodroot dwells;
The wild plum sheds its spicy fragrance rare
Sweet on the rain-drenched, ling'ring springtime air.
While silv'ry sweet from out a basswood tree
A nesting robin plaintive sings to me
Its lullaby of swiftly falling night.
Upon the tiny glade where violets grow
The soft light of the moon sifts gently down.

THE LOOKER-ON

I AM standing on the curbing while the boys are marching by,
I hear the bands a-playing, I see the colors fly:
I see the glint of eager eyes, the clench of brown-hued hands—
Our boys are marching, marching, on their way to alien lands.
They have dropped the hoe and mattock, they have left the desk and pen,
They have gathered to their bosoms the accoutrements of men.
And as the long, brown line goes by, with quick and sturdy stride,
I—I watch them pass me, from the curbstone at the side.

When down the sunny fields of France our boys press toward the foe,
When o'er the shell-scarred, ragged fields our splendid forces flow,
When we hear our guns a-thund'ring, like the mighty voice of God
And the boys press on in glory where despoiling Huns have trod—
When our eagle shrieks in triumph o'er the German fields of slain
And the crimson poppies tremble above a darker stain
Where men have shed their life-blood, over there beyond the tide—
Then I—I watch them marching where I'm standing at the side.

But mayhap the time is coming when I, too, may take my place;
Mayhap the God of Battle toward me, too, may turn His face.
Then the splendor of the struggle, all the glory of the fight
May be mine as I press onward in the battle for the right.
Then no more I'll stand in anguish while the others fight for me;
I'll be fighting with the others, I shall help to make men free.
While our boys go marching onward, great Jehovah as the guide,
I—I, too, shall bear the burden, over on the other side.

PURPLE MEADOWS OF DELIGHT

I LEAVE behind that empty shell of mine
And through the splendid silence of the night,
Along the mystic star-trails, gleaming white,
With eagerness I pass among the stars
Into that purple meadow of delight
Which is our trysting place, our age-old shrine.
In flesh you have been mine but once in twice
A thousand years: Though that were Paradise
More perfect this, when in the star-strewn mead
Your very soul is one with mine indeed.
And though a thousand years may pass, and more,
E'er I shall hold you as I did before,
Within this purple meadow you are mine
Until the pale stars, dying, cease to shine.

Beneath the sun I plod long hours through,
Those waking hours of toil and man-made strife
Which mortal thought would say makes all of life.
But with the darkness opens fair the way—
I leave the body; as a sure-thrown knife
Speeds from the hand, I speed through space to you,
The purple meadows of delight I find.
All thought of flesh and earth is left behind;
No mortal love was e'er so sweet as this,
As when among the stars I feel your kiss
And wander with you o'er the starry sward
Of purple meadows while the moon keeps ward.
Oh, love of mine, in meadow sweet with dew,
Tell me, which life is dream and which is true!

VIOLETS

WE are all withered now, but yesterday
When first we came to you, all dewy sweet,
With tinselled stems and tissue wrapped, complete
In florist's panoply, you found us fair.
You held us to your lips and pinned us there
Upon your breast and said, "Oh violets, pray,
What message have you brought from him today?"
We looked into your eager face above
And whispered what you wished to hear, just, "Love!"
So though today our leaves are withered, dead,
And withered droops each lowly, weary head,
You keep us still upon your breast and say
We still are fair, for still within us lies
The message which brought lovelight to your eyes.

THAT WE REMEMBER

ACROSS the sodden fields of France
The dark clouds sweep, and low;
From crumbled cottage, ruined tower,
The rain drips, silent, slow.
Against the sullen, angry sky
The gaunt trees stand, and bare
Their ragged branches, specter-like,
Outstretched in wild despair.
Nor ever cottage window shows
The gleam of firelight,
Nor ever children's voices sound
In innocent delight.
Here gleam instead the white of bones
Where sons of France have died;
Here sound instead the drip of tears
Where orphaned children cried.
And round the mouldy, ruined walls
The cold winds sigh and sweep—
It is the cry of ravished homes
Where stricken mothers weep.
Leave then these fields of blood-drenched clay
Where crosses, humble, low,
Stand vigil o'er the sacred dead
Who lie here, row on row.

Leave fallen wall and shattered tree,
Leave trench and battle wound;
Leave tangled wire and war's debris
Upon this blood-stained ground,
That never through the coming years,
Whatever they beget,
May we, O children's God! forgive,
And never may forget!

MY MOTHER'S GARDEN

IN a quaint old fashioned garden
In a dear, old fashioned town
Bloomed the sweet, old fashioned flowers
All the garden walks around.
Marigolds in yellow splendor,
Crimson peonies aglow;
On their stems, so tall and slender,
Hollyhocks their blossoms show.
And the Johnny-Jump-Up's faces
Peering shyly through the grass;
Love-In-Mist with dainty laces,
And the Bluebell's azure mass.
Bridalwreath, festooned and flowing
Near the sweet crabapple tree,
Where the petals, pink and glowing,
Set their perfumed odors free.
But of all the fragrant flowers
Blooming in this garden old,
Dewy with the summer showers
There was one of joy untold.
Bumble bees went droning, humming,
Tumbling 'round to steal its sweet;
In the dusk the great moths, coming
Flying, flutt'ring to the treat,
Laved their long tongues in its treasure,
Hovered heedless close above,
Seemed half drunken there with pleasure
In this treasury of love.
'Twas the quaint old fashioned moss rose
That my mother planted there;
'Twas the sweet and fragraut moss rose
On her breast she used to wear.

In the dusk when stars are showing
And a fragrance comes to me
On the summer breezes blowing,
Then again I seem to see
Sweet old flowers that were swaying
In that garden years ago,
And again a boy I'm straying
Where the sweet moss roses grow.

OLD MAN WINTAH

DAMP wind blowin' from the souf,
(Heah Bob White a'whistlin' on the hill!)
Big snowflake come siftin' down
Thoo the branches bare an' brown.
Oak leaves fallin'—driftin' fast,
Wintah sure am come at last—
(Heah Bob White a'whistlin' shrill!)

Soft wind blowin' 'gainst mah face,
(Heyah, Cottontail, whah yoh gwine?)
Gray clouds driftin', wet an' low,
Oak trees tossin' just below—
Suah am settled in mah mind
Dat Old Man Wintah's just behind—
(Dah you go, Cottontail, 'roun' dat yellah pine!)

White birch shinin' thoo the gloom,
(Ol' black crow go cawin' past)
Crick a'flowing, smooth an' brown,
Golden birch leaves floatin' down;
Mus'rat swimmin' up the stream—
Golly! Ain't no time to dream!
(Crow say Wintah come at last.)

Down the hill ol' Hetty waitin',
(Chimbly smokin', smell dat cookin'!)
Dogs go barkin' 'round' de door—
Ain't nevah seen me, cohse, befoah!—
Ground am gettin' wet an' white,
Old Man Wintah come tonight.
(Cabin sure am welcome lookin'!)

THE POPPLE FAIRY

WE all was out in the woods one day,
Jus' Allie an' Jay an' me, an' say!
The sky was blue, an' the air was still—
Was scarce a breeze come over the hill.
An' the big, old sun was shinin' hot
Till Jay says **he'd** just as soon as not
Lie still in the shade of the popple tree.
An' when Jay says **that,** why, Allie an' me
Jus' flopped on our backs. High in the sky
A cloud, scarce movin', was floatin' by.
Through the popple leaves the sun poured down
An' a dronin' bee was the only sound,
Or—high over head—a flyin' crow
Cawed once or twice to his friends below.
But the popple leaves in the quiet air
Shivered and quivered and swung up there,
An' I laughed an' says to Allie, "Say,
Look at them leaves! **'At's** a funny way
Fer leaves to do." An' he says to me
His Ma **she** says it's a fairy tree—
The popple fairies, little an' fat,
An' you can't see **where** they're hangin' at,
Ner no one else, but they turn an' swing
On the popple leaves, an' laugh an' sing.
An' **she** says if he'll just keep still—
But goodness knows if he ever will!—
An' listen sharp, why then some day
'At maybe he'll hear just what they say.
So Allie an' Jay an' me, all three,
We watched the leaves on the popple tree
Swaying an' swinging high up there,
Cool an' green in the silent air.
The bees droned on—a locust whirr'd—
An' that was the only song we heard.
I looked at Jay an' laughed, an' he
Laughed back, an' rolled on the grass, an' we
All three laughed, an' we didn't know why
But we just did, an' I says I
Bet a fairy dropped down from the tree
An' **made** us laugh, Jay an' Allie 'n me.

HAULING THE NET

AT close of day, when western skies
Are painted with the gold that lies
At Heaven's gate, the sturdy men
Of Wedderburn pull in their net.
They stretch the barrier frail and then,
When from the sea the salmon run,
With, "Yo, heave ho!" they swiftly set
The bobbing corks in to the beach;
The waters foam and in the sun
The salmon gleam, until they reach
The sun-browned hand of fisherman,
Who flings them dying on the sand.

Oh, fishermen of Wedderburn,
'Neath incensed hills at set of sun,
How oft to you my mem'ry turns
To see again the salmon run.

THERE IS NO PEACE

I STOOD last night within the ruined shell
Which once was home. The empty windows there—
The blackened hearth, so cold and dank and bare—
The littered floor—and on the tattered wall
A scribbled taunt, a ribald jest from hell!—
Upon the broken tree beside the door
A ragged ribbon waved, 'twas one she wore—
I called—and echo answered—that was all.
"Celeste Marie!"—and thro the doorway crept
A gaunt and weary Thing, all worn and bent,
With vacant eyes which all their hope had spent;
With sunken eyes which all their tears had wept.

They tell me peace has come, that war shall cease:
With bitter heart I cry, "There is no peace!"

GOODNIGHT, SON!

AT evenin', when the shadows lengthened
An' got so you purt' nigh couldn't see,
My ma, she'd come to our back door an' call to me,
An' say, "Now, Johnnie boy, you go an'
Clean your face an' hands. What have you done
To get so dirty? My good lands,
You are the beatenest!"

An' then I'd go an' get the old tin pail
A hangin' in the porch by the back door
Upon its rusty nail, an' take it to the well.
The old pump'd squeak an' sque-e-ak,
An' purty soon the water'd come,
So cold and sweet.

An' then I'd splash an' scrub,
An' come up splutterin', an' then I'd rub
My hands and face and head
Upon the towel, hangin'
In the porch by our back door,
An' wash my feet and scrub some more
B'fore ma'd let me go to bed.

An' then I'd creep between the cool, soft sheets
An' ma'd come an' kiss me, "Goodnight, Son,"
An' take the lamp away, an' down the village street
I'd hear the doors a closin', one by one;
The bullfrog's chuggin' an' the cricket's song
Would drop away, er rise an' swell an' flow along
Until I drifted fast asleep.

Long, long ago! I've drifted far an' wide
An' many years have passed since then,
But when the shadows fall an' eventide
Brings all the sleepy evenin' sounds
Again I live the boyhood days an' see the one
Who tucked me in my bed and kissed me,
"Goodnight, Son!"

Verse by Harry Noyes Pratt, with cover design and decoration by the same, and made into a book in this month of December, nineteen hundred and eighteen, by W. J. Weisman, both of Sacramento, California.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 018 391 061 9